

The White Sheet Music Collection and the International Music Score Library Project: Session F Report from CAML 2014

By Carolyn Doi

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Oil Shows, Rodeos, and UFOs: The Walder G.W. White Sheet Music Collection

Sean Luyk (University of Alberta) spoke about the Walder G.W. White Sheet Music Collection, which was donated to the University of Alberta Library in 2011. The collection is currently being described, digitized, and made available online. The presentation focused on the history of the collection, its contents, and its significance for Canadian music history research. Luyk also spoke about metadata collection and challenges on behalf of co-author Colette Leung (University of Alberta), who was not in attendance.

The White Collection contains more than 6000 items, published from 1840 to 1970, and includes pieces from Canada, the US, UK, and Europe. Of particular interest are the pieces from Canada's Prairies, with covers and lyrics depicting typical local scenes. Luyk highlighted several examples of local life and industry, including "Calgary Square Dance," "The Calgary Kid's Stampede of Songs," and "The Desk and Derrick Song."

The process of creating metadata for the collection and providing access was facilitated through the Sheet Music Consortium (SMC). Using the SMC metadata guidelines, the collection is being described using an Excel template with 32 fields. Special vocabularies and standards such as the Library of Congress vocabularies, AACR2, Candidate Music Genre/Form Terms, and Canadiana Authorities are consulted during the process. The SMC provides a metadata mapping tool to translate the Excel file to XML, after which the records are added to the repository and made available online. As of May 2014, metadata from 4200 items in the White Collection have been uploaded to the Sheet Music Consortium. Select item records and digitized covers have also been included in Peel's Prairie Provinces, an online bibliography of materials related to the settlement and development of the Canadian West. Future plans for this collection include a larger scale digitization project, which will also be made available online.

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IMSLP: Perspectives from a User and a Contributor

Deborah Wills (Wilfrid Laurier University) and Homer Seywerd (Dundas Valley Orchestra) presented a session on the history, usage, and current status of the International Music Score Library Project (IMSLP). Wills began with an overview of the project from the perspective of a site user. While IMSLP is known for its large collection of downloadable scores in the Petrucci Music Library, the project also includes an active discussion forum and a growing number of musical recordings. Due to a 2011 merger with the Werner Icking Music Archive, the size of the Petrucci Music Library has grown significantly in recent years, resulting in more than 300,000 daily downloads from the site. Wills noted that IMSLP has instituted guidelines to maintain the quality of the available scores, including typesetting requirements and image improvements for accuracy and readability. Users will find it easy to locate works either through the browsing feature or through the keyword search function.

Seywerd went on to speak about IMSLP from the perspective of a site contributor and volunteer. Volunteers are always welcome to participate in the online community in a number of ways: by adding works, adding and editing metadata, participating in forums or acting as administrators for copyright review. Many contributors are involved in projects to transfer works from other institutional repositories or to upload scanned copies from personal or local libraries. Composers are also encouraged to upload their own compositions using one of the Creative Commons licenses. New volunteers will find that the MediaWiki platform is easy to navigate and tutorials and forums are available to assist with troubleshooting or questions.

The session concluded on the topic of copyright adherence within the current iteration of IMSLP, which now includes a distributed server system and improved copyright disclaimer. When users attempt to download a score they are automatically redirected to a server located in a country where the work is in the public domain or has been released under a Creative Commons License. A new regional server, Petrucci Music Library – Canada, was launched in July 2013 and is intended for works where copyright lasts 50 years from the death of the author. Discussion on the topic of copyright in relation to IMSLP's activities is well documented in the site's forums.